United Nations S/2006/1050

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 December 2006

Original: English

Letter dated 20 December 2006 from the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the letter from the President of the Council dated 21 June 2006 requesting the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission on the situations in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

The Peacebuilding Commission convened two country-specific meetings on each of these two countries in October and December 2006. In its first country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone and Burundi, held on 12 and 13 October 2006, respectively, the Commission identified the critical challenges that needed to be addressed in both countries to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and create the enabling environment for development and reconstruction.

For Sierra Leone, the critical challenges included social and youth empowerment and employment; consolidating democracy and good governance; justice and security reform; and capacity-building. For Burundi, the critical challenges included promoting good governance; strengthening the rule of law; and ensuring community recovery.

Both countries have made progress since October 2006. In the case of Burundi, this included the efforts by the Government in conducting a mapping of existing and planned activities in the peacebuilding priority areas and the establishment of an inter-ministerial mechanism to follow up on Peacebuilding Commission activities. In Sierra Leone, the Government took steps to revise the peace consolidation strategy based on national consultations involving all stakeholders and continued the efforts to implement the poverty reduction strategy, the medium-term expenditure framework and the peace consolidation strategy.

The second country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, held on 12 December and 13 December 2006, respectively, welcomed the efforts of both countries in developing programmes for addressing the critical challenges in post-conflict peacebuilding and highlighted the areas where further actions were required. As a result of the dialogue in the country-specific meetings of the Commission, there is now an assurance from the Governments of the two countries that they are committed to maintaining the path to peace and an expectation regarding strengthened international support for their national peacebuilding priorities, including from the Peacebuilding Fund.

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The Chairs' summaries adopted at the October and December meetings are attached herewith (see annexes). The dates for the next round of meetings will be set early in the new year.

(*Signed*) Ismael Abraão **Gaspar Martins**
Chairman
Peacebuilding Commission

Annex I

Peacebuilding Commission

Chairman's summary of the Sierra Leone country-specific meeting, 12 October 2006

1. Upon requests by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Security Council, the Organizational Committee on 23 June 2006 selected Sierra Leone to be one of the first countries to be considered by the Peacebuilding Commission.

2. The Government of Sierra Leone and participants in the meeting highlighted the important achievements made in restoring peace and stability in the country and promoting post-conflict recovery. These achievements include steady economic growth, the holding of free and fair elections in 2002, the re-establishment of State authority and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court.

3. Participants noted with satisfaction that the Government had developed a poverty reduction strategy, which had been endorsed in 2005. It was also noted that the Government had initiated reforms in various sectors, including in the governance and security fields. The participants noted in particular that the government strategic development frameworks, including the peace consolidation strategy, had been developed through comprehensive participatory processes involving civil society and other stakeholders.

4. Participants reinforced the Government's view of the specific critical challenges that impede the consolidation of peace, which will need to be addressed urgently to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace and create the enabling environment for development and reconstruction. These critical challenges are summarized as follows:

- **Social and youth empowerment and employment.** Youth marginalization and disempowerment is deep and widespread. The Government has recognized this as a critical peacebuilding issue that requires urgent action. While employment is important, other forms of political, social and economic exclusion also require urgent attention. Women's empowerment requires urgent action. Supporting government efforts to improve educational facilities to increase youth employability, including for young women, the living conditions of youth as well as their meaningful participation in the political and development process is a high priority. This also implies supporting an enabling environment for private-sector development, increasing economic growth, trade and investment and improving public services to facilitate job creation and employment;

- **Consolidating democracy and good governance.** As stated in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the war in Sierra Leone was largely the result of failures in governance and institutional processes in the country. The strengthening of the democratic institutions of governance is an important prerequisite for sustainable peace and development, particularly building capacity of governing institutions, such as Parliament and the National Electoral Commission. The upcoming electoral process will test the strength of institutions and democratic principles in the country. The

successful holding of this second post-conflict election will be a critical step forward in consolidating peace. This priority area includes developing authority through decentralization, building the capacity and professionalization of the civil service and strengthening administrative capacities; creating the institutional and regulatory framework to ensure transparency and to fight against corruption; and the effective management of the economy and natural resources, and the other priorities outlined in the Improved Governance and Accountability Pact;

- **Justice and security sector reform.** All participants agreed on the need to pursue the ongoing national efforts to strengthen the justice system and the fair administration of justice. They also noted that the security sector, police and army, in particular, are in need of further sustained reforms. Participants welcomed the government commitment to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which require further action by the Government and support from the international community;

- **Capacity-building.** Building the capacity of the State to perform its functions and deliver social services is key to laying the foundations for peace and sustainable development. Sierra Leone is in the process of rebuilding the State to extend the jurisdiction of an accountable, transparent and effective administration throughout the country. This will require building on ongoing efforts and sustained international assistance.

5. Participants called on the international community to engage with Sierra Leone. The participants called for donors to increase their support to national efforts to coordinate the mobilization of external resources with a view to building public trust in and credibility of national institutions through the integration of external resources within a national development framework and budget, and to ensure that their assistance is in line with national priorities.

6. Sierra Leone was declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund and was invited to initiate consultations with the United Nations country team on accessing these funds, as described in the Fund's terms of reference.

7. Members of the Peacebuilding Commission invite the Government of Sierra Leone to move forward, with support from the United Nations system and other partners, on strategies and plans for addressing the critical peacebuilding issues identified above, based on comprehensive analysis and a mapping of existing activities. They also invite the Government of Sierra Leone to present an outline of these strategies and plans at the next country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone.

8. Members of the Commission call upon the international community to sustain its political and financial support to Sierra Leone and encourage the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other donors to ensure that the allocation of resources and the activities undertaken reflect the peacebuilding priorities identified above and government initiatives, including through the poverty reduction strategy paper. The Commission calls upon all the relevant actors to enhance their coordination to maximize resources in support of Sierra Leone's peacebuilding priorities. It noted the extent to which regional stability affects progress in Sierra Leone.

9. Today's meeting represents the first in a series of meetings, with the second scheduled to take place before the end of the year. In between formal meetings, the Commission agreed to devote time to informal working meetings to work with the Government of Sierra Leone on the areas where the Commission can add value.

Annex II

Peacebuilding Commission

Chairman's summary of the Burundi country-specific meeting, 13 October 2006

1. Upon requests by the Government of Burundi and the Security Council, the Organizational Committee on 23 June 2006 selected Burundi to be one of the first countries to be considered by the Peacebuilding Commission.

2. The country-specific meeting benefited from comprehensive presentations made by the Government of Burundi, which outlined both its broad development strategies and the critical challenges to consolidating peace. The participants noted that these strategic frameworks were developed through participatory processes. The Government Emergency Programme, the poverty reduction strategy paper, the United Nations Common Action Plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework provide a comprehensive framework that reflects the extensive needs in Burundi's post-conflict reconstruction.

3. Participants noted with satisfaction the progress made in the consolidation of peace with the establishment of an inclusive Government, citing the adoption of a new Constitution, the holding of free and fair elections and, more recently, the signing of a Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and the Forces nationales de libération (National Liberation Forces) (FNL). The participants also expressed deep appreciation for the role played by the Regional Peace Initiative, comprised of Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, South Africa and others, with support from the African Union, the United Nations, and the international community, which resulted in the Arusha Agreement signed by 19 negotiating parties in August 2000, as well as subsequent ceasefire agreements.

4. Participants acknowledged that Burundi is still in an early post-conflict phase and that its development and reconstruction challenges are immense in all areas. They also emphasized the need for an intensive and sustained process of capacity-building to enable the State to perform its functions. They agreed with the Government's view of the critical challenges that impede the consolidation of peace, which will need to be addressed urgently so as to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace and create the enabling environment for development and reconstruction. These critical challenges are summarized as follows:

- **Promoting good governance.** As identified by the Government, the history of poor governance in the country is one of the primary root causes of the conflict. This priority area includes: strengthening governance institutions; participation; reforming the civil service and strengthening administrative capacities; improving planning at both central and local levels; creating an institutional and regulatory environment to ensure transparency and to fight against corruption; strengthening capacities at both the macroeconomic and sectoral levels; increasing donor support to the Government's budget; strengthening civil society;

- **Strengthening the rule of law and the security sector.** All participants agreed on the centrality and importance of national efforts to strengthen the rule of law in consolidating peace. This priority area includes: strengthening

the justice system to ensure the fair administration of justice, combat impunity, ensure the independence of the judiciary, modernize correction services, create an independent national human rights commission and ombudsman's office, revise national legislation to ensure its compliance with international human rights standards and establish a truth and reconciliation commission and a special court. Completing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, with a particular emphasis on effective reintegration programmes to ensure that former combatants are fully integrated into social and economic life, is a priority task, as is reforming the security sector to ensure that it is appropriately sized and effectively managed, under civilian control and respectful of human rights;

– **Ensuring community recovery.** As suggested by the Government, participants agreed that improving the livelihoods of Burundians, in an equitable manner, as part of a broader effort to relaunch the economy, must be addressed if peace is to succeed. In addition, attention should be paid to the problems of youth unemployment, street children, land issues, inequalities with regard to access to resources, particularly for women, assisting communities in ensuring the effective social and economic reintegration of returning refugees, displaced persons and ex-combatants: these are all issues that need to be addressed to strengthen a durable peace. The challenges facing women and girls require concerted attention. Participants noted the need for further support to the National Land Commission.

5. Participants noted with appreciation the Government's emphasis on dialogue with political parties, civil society, including women's groups, the private sector and the media on the development of national strategies for the consolidation of peace. They requested the Government to present updates on the ongoing process of dialogue at the next country-specific meeting and urged the United Nations and the international community to support these efforts.

6. Participants appreciated the efforts made by the Government in implementing the principles contained in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and encourage all actors to continue working towards this aim.

7. Participants called for support to national efforts to coordinate external resources and to ensure that donor assistance is in line with national priorities. The integration of external resources within a national development framework and budget will contribute to building public trust in and credibility of national institutions. Consequently, participants urged the donor community to sustain and increase its support to Burundi and to consider support to the Government's budget so as to avoid the potentially destabilizing effect of non-payment of salaries. An important benchmark will be the forthcoming donor conference following the endorsement of the poverty reduction strategy paper by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

8. The participants also called upon the countries of the Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi and the South African Facilitation to sustain their political support for the consolidation of peace.

9. Burundi was declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund and was invited to initiate consultations with the United Nations presence in the country on accessing these funds, as described in the Fund's terms of reference.

10. Members of the Peacebuilding Commission recommend to the Government to further develop, with support from the United Nations, strategies and plans for addressing the critical peacebuilding issues identified above, based on a mapping of existing activities and the identification of gaps. They noted that the existing national coordination mechanisms should be enhanced to take into account the work of the Commission and strengthen the Government's capacity to lead coordination. They invited the Government to report on the status of development and implementation of these strategies and plans at the next country-specific meeting.

11. Members of the Commission called upon the international community to sustain its political and financial support to Burundi and encouraged the United Nations, the World Bank, IMF and other donors to ensure that the allocation of resources and the activities undertaken reflect the peacebuilding priorities identified above. They also called upon all the relevant actors to enhance their coordination efforts, including sequencing, to maximize resources in support of Burundi's peacebuilding priorities.

12. Members of the Commission noted that this meeting represents the first in a series of meetings, with the second scheduled to take place before the end of the year. In between formal meetings, they agreed to devote time to informal working meetings to work with the Government of Burundi on the areas where the Commission can add value.

Annex III

Peacebuilding Commission

Chairman's summary of the Burundi country-specific meeting, 12 December 2006

1. The Peacebuilding Commission held its second country-specific meeting on the situation in Burundi on 12 December 2006. This was in follow-up to the 13 October 2006 meeting, and in the context of the Commission's ongoing efforts to support national efforts for the consolidation of peace.

2. Members of the Commission noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Government of Burundi in further identifying the gaps in peacebuilding activities that require urgent attention and support from the international community and welcomed the efforts made by the Government in conducting a mapping of existing and planned activities in the peacebuilding priority areas and the establishment of an inter-ministerial mechanism to follow up on Commission activities. They also noted with appreciation the role played by the United Nations system in the field in assisting the Government in the mapping and identification of gaps.

3. Members of the Commission agreed with the Government's emphasis on the need for a strengthened national dialogue and welcomed recent initiatives in this regard aimed at engaging the media, civil society organizations and political parties. In this context, they expressed their full support to these efforts and to assist in supporting the development and implementation of a systematic series of dialogues aimed at building consensus on the Government's strategies and plans for the consolidation of peace.

4. Members of the Commission also welcomed the importance placed by the Government on initiating immediate action in the areas of combating corruption, professionalization of security forces and small arms reduction, strengthening the rule of law, the justice system, the fight against impunity and support for the establishment and functioning of the Land Commission.

5. Members of the Commission expressed concern about the shortfall in budget support and the potential negative consequences for peacebuilding efforts should the Government fail to consistently provide adequate and timely salaries to civil servants and members of the security forces. They noted with satisfaction efforts made by the Government to strengthen accountability and transparency in the management of public funds and looked forward to further progress in this area.

6. Members of the Commission heard from the international financial institutions on the need for continued macroeconomic stability and robust economic growth in order to ease social tensions caused by the long-term decline in per capita income and land tenure issues relating to the return of refugees and displaced persons.

7. Members noted with satisfaction that arrangements to facilitate the disbursement of the Peacebuilding Fund in Burundi had been put into place and that progress had been made in identifying priority activities. With the conclusion of the review stipulated in the terms of reference of the Fund, it is expected that a country envelope of approximately US$ 25 million can be made available.

8. Members of the Commission noted the Government's concerns about human rights abuses and its commitment to address these concerns, including gender equality issues, and highly recommend that support be provided urgently to the Government's plan to establish an independent national human rights commission and to develop transitional justice mechanisms. Such support should accelerate building up national capacities for both the promotion and protection of human rights.

9. Members of the Commission were concerned that the donor per capita assistance in Burundi remains low. The realization of civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development will require meaningful commitments, including sustained political will from the Government as well as a commitment from the international community to ensure a more adequate level of external assistance. In this regard, members urged the international community to lend support to the Government to broaden its donor base and secure the assistance that is required, including through the planned roundtable to be held in the first quarter of 2007. They noted the need to channel donor resources in a manner that enhances national capacities, with due consideration to national priorities. Positive steps taken by the Government and by the international community will help to deepen trust and confidence between the Government and its international partners, which is necessary for strengthening cooperation and therefore for advancing peacebuilding.

10. Members of the Commission urged the international community, including the international financial institutions, donors and United Nations system, to support national efforts to address the priorities and gaps being identified by the Government.

11. A follow-up meeting will be held in 2007 to review the actions undertaken by the Government and to assess progress in the realization of national peacebuilding goals and integrated strategies, the effectiveness of international assistance in peacebuilding and ways in which this assistance can be enhanced.

12. Members of the Commission requested the Chair of the country-specific meeting to develop a workplan (with a corresponding timeline) for the actions to be undertaken by the Government, the United Nations system and the larger international community in follow-up to the issues outlined above and in preparations for the upcoming country-specific meeting. They also requested the Chair, with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, to keep them engaged and regularly briefed on the progress made in implementing the workplan and to draw upon their expertise and contributions in this process.

Annex IV

Peacebuilding Commission

Chairman's summary of the Sierra Leone country-specific meeting, 13 December 2006

1. The Peacebuilding Commission held its second country-specific meeting on the situation in Sierra Leone on 13 December 2006. The meeting was a follow-up to the one held on 12 October 2006 and in the context of the Peacebuilding Commission's ongoing work in support of peace consolidation and risk reduction efforts led by the Government of Sierra Leone.

Progress to date

2. Members of the Commission noted with appreciation the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone in further revising the peace consolidation strategy based on national consultations involving all stakeholders and highlighting the immediate peacebuilding challenges facing Sierra Leone. They also welcomed the efforts of the international community in supporting the Government in the development and implementation of the poverty reduction strategy, the medium-term expenditure framework and the peace consolidation strategy, and in building national capacities for conflict prevention and long-term development. All peacebuilding efforts should be linked to the existing strategies under the leadership and ownership of the Government of Sierra Leone. They noted with satisfaction the support provided by various donors to several critical areas of interventions, in particular in infrastructure rehabilitation and service provision.

3. Members of the Commission recognized that the process of engagement between the Government and the international community, including the United Nations system, through these various frameworks should lead to greater confidence-building and concrete results which can be described as peace dividends. Indeed, an important contribution that the Commission can make is to help countries emerging from conflict to support the creation of an enabling environment for economic recovery and medium to long-term growth and development, including by stimulating domestic investments, promoting trade and increasing foreign investment. They also recognized the need to encourage subregional cooperation as an important element of consolidation of peace and stability and, in that regard, encouraged continued support to the Mano River Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

4. Members of the Commission welcomed the political will and commitment of the Government of Sierra Leone in addressing youth empowerment and employment issues through the creation of a youth employment scheme, which focuses on the most immediate challenges facing young people. Some donors and the United Nations system have already expressed commitment to support the Government's efforts in this regard, noting that such support will have a quick impact and an overall positive effect on the stability of the country. In this regard, the contribution of the private sector to economic growth, including creating sustainable opportunities for youth employment, should be encouraged.

5. Members of the Commission noted with satisfaction that arrangements to facilitate the disbursement of the Peacebuilding Fund in Sierra Leone have been put into place and that progress had been made in identifying priority activities. With the conclusion of the review stipulated in the terms of reference of the Fund, it is expected that a country envelope of approximately US$ 25 million can be made available as an initial contribution. In this context, it was noted that arrangements are now in place to enable donors to convert pledges announced into contributions.

Challenges and gaps

6. The Commission welcomed the efforts of the Government in implementing the comprehensive security sector reform programme and improving the professionalism and capacity of the security agencies. Members of the Commission noted that support to reform efforts in the justice and security sectors is critical to addressing the immediate challenges to peace consolidation.

7. The Commission agreed with the Government that establishing and strengthening democratic institutions of governance are indispensable prerequisites for peacebuilding and that support to such institutions is critical as Sierra Leone prepares for its second post-conflict parliamentary and presidential elections. Enhancing the role and participation of civil society, including women's groups in Sierra Leone's political transformation, is critical and requires urgent attention and support through capacity-building activities and the strengthening of coordination and communication strategies with the Government and other actors.

8. Members of the Commission agreed with the Government that addressing the challenges facing the justice system in Sierra Leone requires a comprehensive approach, including the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, support for the continued work of the Special Court, support to the newly established National Human Rights Commission, support to efforts enhancing traditional dispute settlement mechanisms, addressing the backlog of court cases and increasing access to justice for the majority of the population.

9. The Commission welcomed the desire of the Government to undertake a comprehensive and sustainable civil service reform providing opportunities for merit-based recruitment and stronger performance accountability systems. The creation of the Senior Executive Service within the civil service was seen as a first step in this direction. Further support is needed to urgently address the capacity gap and low levels of women in the civil service and ensure effective delivery of public services. The Commission noted with satisfaction the collaboration between the Government and international partners in launching a review of a national anti-corruption strategy and stressed the need to enhance efforts at combating corruption and promoting greater accountability through implementation of its recommendations.

Next steps and recommendations

10. The Commission recognizes that peacebuilding, whether in Sierra Leone or elsewhere, requires sustained efforts across a broad spectrum of political commitments, security reforms, development investments and responses to the immediate needs of the population. While emphasizing the importance of detailed mapping and further identification of gaps, members of the Commission noted that

the completion of a mapping process should be carried out in parallel to support for immediate, short-term, quick-impact priorities.

11. Members of the Commission urged the international community to ensure an adequate level of external assistance and to lend support to the Government of Sierra Leone to broaden its donor base and secure assistance, including further debt relief, to meet its peace consolidation objectives. They noted the need to focus donor resources to enhance national capacity, coordination and aid effectiveness in full agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone.

12. Members of the Commission called on the international community to provide, in a timely manner, adequate resources and support for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, including capacity-building to ensure women's equal participation in the political process.

13. Members of the Commission requested the Peacebuilding Support Office to present a calendar of ongoing and planned peacebuilding-related activities for Sierra Leone.

14. Members of the Commission recognized that the Commission process should enable further sharpening of the peace consolidation strategy, as well as monitoring progress on its implementation. They requested the Chair of the country-specific meeting for Sierra Leone to develop, in consultation with the members of the country-specific meeting of the Commission and with the active support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, a workplan for the country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone with a clear timeline and division of responsibilities for actions to be undertaken by the Government, the United Nations system and other stakeholders in preparation for the next country-specific meeting of the Commission. They also requested the Chair, with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, to keep them informed of and regularly briefed on the progress in implementing the workplan and to draw upon their expertise and contributions in this process.

15. Members of the Commission stressed that every effort should be made to deliver the Peacebuilding Fund country envelope for Sierra Leone in January 2007 so that implementation of the agreed short-term priorities can commence immediately, taking into account the need for wider consultations among all stakeholders on specific projects. A follow-up meeting of the Commission on Sierra Leone, to be held in March 2007, will review actions and progress undertaken in the realization of peacebuilding goals and priorities, the effectiveness of international assistance and ways in which this assistance can be enhanced. In response to the invitation of the Government of Sierra Leone, members of the Commission agreed to consider the possibility of a visit to that country before the review.